



**Our Father Among the Saints Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons,
Whom the holy Church Celebrates on August 23.**

The Holy Hieromartyr Irenaeus was born in Asia Minor about the year 120, and in his youth was a disciple of Saint Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. Saint Irenaeus was sent to Lyons in Gaul to be a fellow laborer of Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons (celebrated June 2), who had also been a disciple of Saint Polycarp. After the martyrdom of Saint Pothinus, Saint Irenaeus succeeded him as Bishop of Lyons. Besides the assaults of paganism, Irenaeus found himself compelled to do battle with many Gnostic heresies, against which he wrote his greatest work, *A Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So Called*. He was also a peace-maker within the Church. When Victor, Bishop of Rome, was prepared to excommunicate the Christians of Asia minor for following a different tradition of celebrating Pascha, Irenaeus persuaded him to moderate his zeal, and mediated peace. He made Lyons an illustrious bastion of Orthodoxy and a school of piety, and sealed his confession with martyrdom about the year 202, during the reign of Septimius Severus. He is not to be confused with Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Sirmium, also celebrated today, who was beheaded and cast into a river in 304 under Diocletian.

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*Dismissal Hymn of the Hieromartyr
Plagal of First Tone. Let us worship the Word*

LET us praise Irenaeus, the hierarch of the Lord, * the Holy Spirit's pure vessel and radiant star of Lyons; * for he kept the holy Faith free from all heresy * by his divinely-written books, * which still guide the Church of Christ into that most peaceful haven. * Wherefore, now crowned as a Martyr, he intercedeth that our souls be saved.

*Kontakion of the Hieromartyr. Fourth Tone
On this day Thou hast appeared*

LET us laud the Saint of God, * famed Irenaeus, * who bare witness for the Faith * both by his words and precious blood; for he refuted grave heresies * and kept the Church in the peace of our Master Christ.

Saint Irenaeus brought all of the Roman Province of Gaul to the faith of Christ. From his See in Lyon on the Rhone River, which drains the eastern slopes of the French Alps and flows into the Mediterranean west of Marseilles, the Saint brought the Lord's peace to Gaul instead of the ravages of war and subjugation of the Gallic tribesmen to the Roman Empire under Julius Caesar.

For our Virtual Parishioners, we will offer, based on the Saint's writings in *Against Heresies* and *The Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, a brief outline of his teaching.

Although the Saint devotes many pages of the initial volumes of *Against Heresies* to the refutation of various Gnostic teachings, our approach will center on the positive teaching that he brings to the Orthodox Christians of our time.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Against Heresies: A Refutation and Subversion of Knowledge Falsely So Called cf. 2 Tim. 6:20; Ante-Nicene Christian Library Vol. V. Irenæus; Vol. I through V.: T. & T. Clark Edinburgh Scotland 1868.

The Proof of the Apostolic Preaching, Armenian Version; Ed. and Tr. Bishop Karapet Ter Mëkërttschian and S. G. Wilson: Paris, le 25 août 1913. Tous droits reserves. This lost work of Saint Irenæus' was recovered by Bishop Karapet Ter Mëkërttschian in its entirety in an Armenian text in an Armenian Monastery in December, 1904.

Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons

Against Knowledge Falsely So-called.

Martyred A.D. 202

Selected Quotations

Offer to Him thy heart in a soft and tractable state,
and preserve the form
in which the Creator has fashioned thee,
having moisture in thyself,
lest, by becoming hardened,
thou loose the impressions of His fingers.

Against Heresies Vol. II; Book 4: 39, 2; Harvey, p.46

For the glory of God is a living man;
and the life of man consists in beholding God.

Against Heresies Book 4:20.7 Harvey p. 444.

The man who loves God shall arrive at such excellency as even to see God,
and hear His word and from the hearing of His discourse be glorified
to such an extent that others cannot behold
the glory of his countenance , as was said by Daniel:
“Those who do understand, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament,
and many of the righteous as the stars for ever and ever.”

Against Heresies Book 4:26.1 Harvey p. 461, 2

Ever, indeed, speaking well of the undeserving,
but never ill of the undeserving,
we also shall attain to the glory and kingdom of God.

Lost Writings of Irenaeus Fragment IX

The business of the Christian
is nothing else than to be ever preparing for death.
(μελετᾶν ἀποθνήσκειν).

Lost writings of Irenaeus Fragment XI

The Transcendent Love of Christ

Following the only true and steadfast teacher, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.

Against Heresies Book 5 Preface; Harvey (Vol. II) p. 55

The Son of God, although He was perfect, passed through the state of infancy in common with the rest of mankind, partaking of it not for His own benefit, but for that of the infantile stage of man's existence, in order that man might be able to receive Him.

Against Heresies Book 4; Harvey (Vol. II) 38 p. 43

The beholding of God is productive of immortality.

Against Heresies Book 4: Harvey (Vol. II) 38 p. 44

The Healing of the Man Born Blind

Saint John 9:1-41

To that man...who had been blind from his birth, He gave sight, not by means of a word but by an outward action; doing this not without a purpose, or because it so happened, but that He might show forth the hand of God, that which at the beginning had moulded man. And therefore, when His disciples asked Him for what cause the man had been born blind, whether for his own or his parents' fault, He replied, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."¹ Now the work of God is the fashioning of man. For, as the Scripture says, He made man by a kind of process: "And the Lord took clay from the earth and formed man."² Wherefore also the Lord spat on the ground and made clay, and smeared it upon the eyes, pointing out the original fashioning [of man], how it was effected, and manifesting the hand of God to those who can understand by what [hand] man was formed out

¹ John 9:3

² cf. Gen: 2:7 LXX; "And God formed the man of dust of the earth."

of the dust. For that which the artificer, the Word, had omitted to form in the womb, [viz. the blind man's eyes], He then supplied in public, that the works of God might be manifested in him, in order that we might not be seeking out another hand by which man was fashioned, nor another Father; knowing that this hand of God which formed us at the beginning, and which does form us in the womb, has in the last times sought out us who are lost, winning back His own, and taking up the lost sheep on His shoulders, and with joy restoring it to the fold of Life.

3. Now, that the Word of God forms us in the womb, He says to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth from the womb, I sanctified thee; I appointed thee a prophet to the nations."³ And Paul, too says in like manner, "But when it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, that I might declare Him among the nations."⁴ As, therefore, we are formed in the womb, this very same Word formed the visual power in him who had been blind from his birth; showing openly Who it is that fashions us in secret, since the Word Himself had been made manifest to men: and declaring the original formation of Adam, and the manner in which he was created, and by what Hand he had been fashioned, indicating the whole from a part. For the Lord Who formed the visual powers is He Who made the whole man, carrying out the will of the Father. And inasmuch as man, with respect to that formation, which was after Adam, having fallen into transgression, needed the laver of regeneration, [the Lord] said to him [upon whom He had conferred sight], after He had smeared his eyes with the clay said, "Go to Siloam and wash;"⁵ thus restoring him to his perfect confirmation, and that regeneration which takes place by means of the laver. And for this reason when he was washed he came seeing, that he might both know Him Who had fashioned him, and that man might learn [to know] Him who has conferred upon him Life.

Against Heresies Book 5; Harvey (Vol. II) pp. 96 - 98

On True Knowledge

True knowledge is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the Apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout all the world, and the

³ Jeremias 1:5 LXX

⁴ Gal 1:15

⁵ John 9:7

distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the succession of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete harmony of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes]; and [it consists in] reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy; and [above all, it consists in] the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than all knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God].

Against Heresies 4. 33.8 Harvey (Vol. II) p. 11

A PRAYER OF SAINT IRENAEUS

Wherefore I do also call upon Thee, the Lord God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob and Israel, Who art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God Who, through abundance of Thy mercy, hast had a favour towards us, that we should know Thee, Who hast made heaven and earth, Who rulest over all, Who art the only and the true God, above Whom there is none other God; grant, by our Lord Jesus Christ, the governing power of the Holy Spirit; give to every reader of this book to know Thee, and to avoid every heretical, and godless, and impious doctrine.

Against Heresies Book 3. 6.4 Harvey, p. 271.

A Divine Festival by Saint Irenaeus

The Preaching of the Church is everywhere consistent, and continues in an even course, and receives testimony from the prophets, the apostles, and all the disciples—as I have proved—through those in the beginning, the middle, and the end, and through the entire dispensation of God, that well-grounded tradition⁶ which leads to man’s salvation, namely, our Faith; which, having been received by the Church, we do preserve, and which always, by the Spirit of God,

⁶ The Harvey English text here translates with the term ‘system.’ Christian teaching based on a philosophical ‘system’ was unknown before the advent of the system based on Neo-Platonism developed by Augustine Bishop of Hippo Regius in North Africa in the early 400’s. The term ‘tradition’ better reflects the Apostolic practice itself and the practice of those, such as St. Irenaeus, who had been taught by St. Polycarp of Smyrna, a disciple of Saint John the Evangelist, the beloved disciple. (Virtual Parish Editor.)

renewing its youth, as if it were some precious deposit in an excellent vessel, causes the vessel itself containing it to renew its youth also.

For this gift of God has been entrusted to the Church, as breath was to the first created man, for this purpose, that all the members receiving it may be vivified; and the [means of] communion with Christ has been distributed throughout it, that is, the Holy Spirit, the earnest of incorruption, the means of confirming our faith, and the ladder of our ascent to God. "For in the Church," it is said, "God hath set apostles, prophets, teachers,"⁷ and all the other means through which the Spirit works; of which all those are not partakers who do not join themselves to the Church [thus] defrauding themselves of life through their perverse opinions and infamous behaviour.

For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace; but the Spirit is truth. Those, therefore, who do not partake of Him, are neither nourished into life from the mother's breasts, nor do they enjoy that most limpid fountain which issues from the body of Christ; but they dig for themselves broken cisterns⁸ out of earthly trenches, and drink putrid water out of the mire, fleeing from the Faith of the Church lest they be convicted; and rejecting the Spirit, that they may not be instructed.

Against Heresies Book 3, 24.1 Harvey pp. 369, 70.

SAINT IRENAEUS VINDICATES THE SEPTUAGINT

1. God, then, was made man, and the Lord did Himself save us, giving us the token of the Virgin. But not as some allege, among those now presuming to expound the Scripture, [thus:] "Behold a virgin shall conceive in the womb, and bring forth a son,"⁹ as Theodotion the Ephesian has interpreted, and Aquila of Pontus,¹⁰ both Jewish proselytes. The Ebionites, following these, assert that He was begotten by Joseph; thus destroying, as far as in them lies, such a marvellous dispensation of God, and setting aside the testimony of the prophets which

⁷ 1 Cor. 12:28.

⁸ Jer. 2:13

⁹ Esaias 7:14 LXX

¹⁰ Epiphanius, in his *De Mensuris*, gives an account of these two men. The former published his version of the Old Testament in the year 181. The latter put forth his translation half a century earlier, about 129 A.D. This reference to the version of Theodotion furnishes a note of date as to the time when Irenaeus published his work: it must have been subsequently to A.D. 181.

proceeded from God. For truly this prediction was uttered before the removal of the people to Babylon; that is, anterior to the supremacy acquired by the Medes and Persians. But it was interpreted into Greek by the Jews themselves, much before the period of our Lord's advent, that there might remain no suspicion that perchance the Jews, complying with our humour, did put this interpretation upon these words. They indeed, had they been cognizant of our future existence, and that we should use these proofs from the Scriptures, would themselves never have hesitated to burn their own Scriptures, which do declare that all other nations partake of [eternal] life, and show that they who boast themselves as being the house of Jacob and the people of Israel, are disinherited from the grace of God.

2. For before the Romans possessed their kingdom, while as yet the Macedonians held Asia, Ptolemy the son of Lagus, being anxious to adorn the library which he had founded in Alexandria with a collection of the writings of all men, which were [works] of merit, made request of the people of Jerusalem, that they should have their Scriptures translated into the Greek language. And they—for at that time they were still subject to the Macedonians—sent to Ptolemy seventy of their elders, who were thoroughly skilled in the Scriptures and in both languages, God having accomplished what He intended. But he, wishing to test them individually, and fearing lest they might perchance, by taking counsel together, conceal the truth in the Scriptures by their interpretation, separated them from each other, and commanded them all to write the same translation. He did this with respect to all the books. But when they came together in the same place before Ptolemy, and each of them compared his own interpretation with that of every other, God was indeed glorified, and the Scriptures were acknowledged as truly divine. For all of them read out the common translation [which they had prepared] in the very same words and the very same names, from beginning to end, so that even the Gentiles present perceived that the Scriptures had been interpreted by the inspiration of God. And there was nothing astonishing in God having done this,—He Who, when, during the captivity of the people under Nabuchodonosor, (Daniel 2:1 LXX) the Scriptures had been corrupted, and when, after seventy years, the Jews had returned to their own land, then, in the times of Artaxerxes king of the Persians, inspired Esdras the priest, of the tribe of Levi, to 'recast' all the words of the former prophets, and to re-establish with the people the Mosaic legislation.

Against Heresies Book 3. 21. 1-5; Harvey pp. 351-6.

Why there are Four Gospels and the Significance of Each Gospel.

8. It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the “pillar and ground” of the Church is the Gospel and the Spirit of Life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh. From which fact it is evident that the Word, the Artificer of all, He that sitteth upon the Cherubim, and contains all things, He who was manifested to men, has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit. As also David says, when entreating His manifestation, “Thou that sittest between the Cherubim, shine forth.” For the Cherubim, too, were four-faced, and their faces were images of the dispensation of the Son of God. For, [as the Scripture] says, “The first living creature was like a lion,” symbolizing His effectual working, His leadership, and royal power; the second living creature was like a calf, signifying His sacrificial and sacerdotal order; but “the third had, as it were, the face as of a man,”—an evident description of His advent as a human being; “the fourth was like a flying eagle” pointing out the gift of the Spirit hovering with His wings over the Church. And therefore the Gospels are in accord with these things, among which Christ Jesus is seated.

For that according to John relates His original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” Also, “All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made.” For this reason, too, is that Gospel full of all confidence, for such is His Person.

But that according to Luke, taking up [His] priestly character, commenced with Zacharias the priest offering sacrifice to God. For now was made ready the fatted calf, about to be immolated for the finding again of the younger son.

Matthew, again relates His generation as a man, saying, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham;” and also “The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise.” This, then, is the Gospel of His

humanity;¹¹ for which reason it is, too, that [the character of] a humble and meek man is kept up through the whole Gospel.

Mark, on the other hand, commences with [a reference to] the prophetical spirit coming down from on high to men, saying, “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the Prophet” —pointing to the winged aspect of the Gospel; and on this account he made a compendious and cursory narrative, for such is the prophetical character.

And the Word of God Himself used to converse with the Patriarchs who came before Moses, in accordance with His divinity and glory;¹² but for those under the law He instituted a sacerdotal and liturgical service. Afterwards, being

¹¹ The Greek text of this clause, literally rendered, is, “This Gospel, then, is anthropomorphic”.

¹² Saint Irenaeus here bears witness to *the teaching of the Orthodox Fathers of the Church that Our Lord Jesus Christ personally kept in touch with the fallen sons of Adam until the Annunciation of His Incarnation to Our Lady the Theotokos*. He stayed with us. He never turned His back to us. Every step that He took after Adam and Eve’s Ancestral Sin was a deliberate effort to bring us back to Him as soon as possible. As St. Irenaeus writes in *The Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* § 12 “But man was a child without perfect understanding and for that reason was easily deceived by the Deceiver.” In the Garden, Christ went looking for His lost child, Adam. He kept calling, “Adam, where art thou?” “And they heard the voice of the Lord God (i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ before He became man for our sakes) walking in the afternoon; and both Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the garden” (Gen. 3:9 LXX). The Lord Jesus was calling out to Adam in the hope that Adam would say, “Lord, I did what You told me not to do. Forgive me.” But the Lord did not hear the words of repentance that He had wished to hear from Adam. Adam, having lost the garments of uncreated light and power with which he and his helpmeet had been clothed when they were created, now aware of their nakedness, said nothing. He hid himself, as did his wife “from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the garden.” Had Adam repented, he would have died in the garden. As unrepentant, it was the Lord’s mercy that cast him and his wife out of the garden. What mercy of the Lord was that? Had they, having chosen not to repent, been allowed to stay in the garden, they could have eaten from the Tree of Life. Then their unrepentance would have become immortal; their immortal unrepentance would have shut the door of salvation. They never could have cried, “Lord have mercy!” Outside the garden, Adam, seeing now what he had lost through his stubborn failure to repent, finally, in bitter tears, did repent. This merciful expulsion from the garden kept the opportunity for repentance alive for Adam and his descendants. The Lord also spoke with Cain before and after he had slain Abel. He even “Set a mark on Cain so that no one that found him might slay him” (Gen. 4:13 LXX). As He spoke with Cain, so He continues to address us in many ways. The Lord has never, ever, stopped asking us to repent and run to Him. He says, “Repent ye and believe the Gospel” (Mk. 1:15) and, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen [doth gather] her brood under [her] wings, and ye would not! (Luke 13:34). Blessed is the man who finds and enters the door of repentance. [Virtual Parish Editor]

made man for us, he sent the gift of the celestial Spirit over all the earth, protecting us with His wings.

Such, then was the course followed by the Son of God, so also was the form of the living creatures; and such as was the form of the living creatures so was also the character of the Gospel. For the living creatures are quadriform, and the Gospel is quadriform, as is also the course followed by the Lord. For this reason were four principal testaments given to the human race one, prior to the deluge, under Adam; the second, that after the deluge, under Noah, the third, the giving of the law under Moses; the fourth, which renovates man, and sums up all things in itself by means of the Gospel, raising and bringing men upon its wings into the heavenly Kingdom.¹³

Against Heresies Book 3.11.8; Harvey pp. 293-295.

Note: Saint Irenæus' teaching—not only on the 'Quadriform Gospel' but also on the association of each of the four living creatures with a Gospelwright, i.e. Ss. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,—found, so far as can be determined, immediate and unquestioned acceptance throughout the Church. St. Irenæus was martyred in A.D. 207. The African Code, or Council of Carthage, in A.D. 416 is, after Canon 85 of the 85 Apostolic Canons, the first to give a list of Canonical Scripture. All the Canonical Old Testament Scriptures are to be found only in the Septuagint. The Four Gospels are listed by the holy Fathers of Carthage in the same order as given by Saint Irenæus. The Cover of the highly illuminated Book of Kells, which is a book of the Gospels, now in the University of Dublin, Ireland dates from A.D. 800, and faithfully displays Saint Irenæus' four winged creatures discussed above. St. Irenæus' designation and design has held fast for over eighteen hundred years up until this very day. [Virtual Parish Editor.]

CHRIST RECAPITULATED ALL THE PHASES OF HUMAN LIFE IN ORDER TO SAVE US IN EVERY STAGE OF OUR LIVES.

But as our Lord is alone truly Master, so the Son of God is truly good and patient, the Word of God the Father having been made the Son of man. For He fought and conquered; for He was a man contending for the fathers, and through obedience doing away with disobedience completely: for He bound the strong man,¹⁴ and set free the weak and endowed His own handiwork with salvation by

¹³ Saint Irenæus uses the term 'quadriform' to call attention to the four-fold nature of both the winged creatures around the throne (Rev. 4:6-7) and the four Gospels themselves.

¹⁴ Matt. 12:29

destroying sin. For He is a most holy and merciful Lord, and loves the human race.

7. Therefore, as I have already said, He caused man (human nature) to cleave to and to become one with God. For unless man had overcome the enemy of man, the enemy would not have been legitimately vanquished. And again: unless it had been God who had freely given salvation, we could never have possessed it securely. And unless man had been joined to God, he could never have become a partaker of incorruptibility.¹⁵ For it was incumbent upon the Mediator between God and men, by His relationship to both, to bring both to friendship and concord, and present man to God while He revealed God to man. For, in what way could we be partakers of the adoption of sons,¹⁶ unless we had received from through the Son that fellowship which refers to Himself, unless His Word, having been made flesh, had entered into communion with us? Wherefore also He passed through every stage of life, restoring all to communion with God.

Against Heresies Book 3.18.6; Harvey pp. 342 f.

Note: In the editor's note on the Third Theological Oration of Saint Gregory Nazianzen, NPNF Vol. VII p. 308 α, a point relevant to St. Irenæus' doctrine of Recapitulation is made. St. Irenæus remarks, "He passed through every stage of life", in order to restore all the stages of human life to union with God. Had He omitted a stage, we could not have been saved. St Irenæus does not draw this conclusion but Saint Gregory writes, "If any does not admit Mary to be the Mother of God (Θεοτόκον), he is separated from God. If any say that He passed through the Virgin as through a conduit, and that He was not formed in her both divinely and humanly (divinely, because without a human father; humanly, because in accordance with the laws of gestation), he is in like manner

¹⁵ Orthodox Christians through their Holy Baptism, even in this life, have become partakers "of incorruptibility" as "Partakers of the Divine Nature" 2 Pet 1:4. Our 'adoption as sons,' that is, our deification, begins with our Orthodox Baptism, as Saint John says to us, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). Adam and Eve had "hid themselves from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the garden" (Gen 3:9). Now we see on the Iconostasis in our Churches as well as in the Icons of Christ in our homes "the face of God". We have, in our union with Christ, been restored to a state before God even better than Adam had when he was created from the dust of the earth. In our Orthodox worship we "are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" that is, those who now see Him, even though they are not yet "clothed upon" (2 Cor. 5:4) with their resurrected bodies, *as He is*" (Heb. 12:2). Brethren, let us take comfort in the uncreated powers of the Lord by which we are so mercifully enabled to rejoice in our tears and "run with patience the race that is set before us" in the firm hope of being "set down" with our Christ "at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). "We walk by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7) praying, "turn me not away in shame from mine expectation" (Ps. 118:116 LXX). [Virtual Parish Editor]

¹⁶ That is, "partakers of the Divine Nature" (2 Peter 1:4), or deification.

atheistic. If any assert that the humanity was thus formed, and the Deity subsequently added, he is condemned; for this is not a generation of God, but an evasion of generation" (S.G.N. ad Cledonius, Ep. i). Gregory merely means that the Godhead of the Lord was not derived from His Blessed Mother, just as his Manhood was not derived from any man; but, as an extract at the beginning of the note shows, he would be the last to take up Nestorius' notion, which was afterwards condemned at the Council of Ephesus." The Third Ecumenical Council was convened in A.D. 430 in Ephesus. Saint Irenæus likewise would not allow for "an evasion of generation." That, since it would omit a stage of human life, would not allow the stage thus omitted to be united with God and saved. We see that the Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, which convened in Constantinople in A. D. 551 to condemn Monothelitism, used a single phrase which harkens back to Saint Irenæus' Doctrine of Recapitulation: "That which was not assumed was not redeemed." In their case the Holy Fathers determined and decreed that were Christ to have but one will, and that divine, we could not be saved because our human will was not assumed by Christ.

It has taken some time to make this point, but it is well worth it on at least two counts: First, the doctrine: "That which was not assumed by Christ was not redeemed and healed by Him" is clear. Thus, a heretic, such as Nestorius, and his heresy, deals in death simply because he denies our salvation. Secondly, we have had a chance to see how one thread of the Church's teaching is stoutly maintained because Christ has made it so. (Saint Athanasius always wants us to include what he calls, "the scope of the Gospel" in our studies of the Church and her life.) As Saint Irenæus writes, "Following the only true and steadfast teacher, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself." (See p. 3 top) He, in His unbounded compassion for us, became all that we are, without sin, in order that we might become all that He is, except for identity of essence.

The Holy Fathers of the Church are all of one mind. [Virtual Parish Editor]

The Two Hands of God

Now man is a mixed organization of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God, and moulded by His hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit, to Whom also He said, "Let us make man."¹⁷

Against Heresies Book 4 Preface § 4 Harvey p. 377.

The Certain Gift of Truth

¹⁷ "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them by the Spirit of His mouth" (Ps. 32:6 LXX).

Wherefore it incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the Apostles; those who, with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of the truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But [it is also incumbent] to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, [looking upon them] either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory. For all these have fallen from the truth. And the heretics, indeed, who bring strange fire to the altar of God—namely, strange doctrines—shall be burned by the fire from heaven, as Nadab and Abiud.¹⁸ But such as rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God, [shall] remain among those in hell, being swallowed up by an earthquake, even as those who were with Chore, Dathan, and Abiron.¹⁹ But those who cleave asunder, and separate from the unity of the Church, [shall] receive from God the same punishment as Jeroboam did.

Against Heresies Book 4: 24:2; Harvey pp. 462,463.

Even Barbarians Are Made Wise Because of Faith

Those who, in the absence of written documents, have believed this faith, are barbarians, so far as regards our language, but as regards doctrine, manner and tenor of life, they are, because of faith, very wise indeed; and they do please God, ordering their conversation in all righteousness, chastity and wisdom. If anyone were to preach to these men the inventions of the heretics, speaking to them in their own language, they would at once stop their ears and flee off as far as possible, not even enduring to listen to the blasphemous address.

Thus, by means of that ancient tradition of the apostles, they do not suffer their mind to conceive anything of [the doctrines suggested by the] portentous language of these teachers among whom neither Church nor doctrine has ever been established.

Against Heresies, Book 3; 4.2; Harvey, p. 265

¹⁸ Lev. 10:1, 2 LXX

¹⁹ Num. 16:33

THE PROOF OF THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING

Saint Irenaeus of Lyons

§ 42 That all this must be so, the Spirit of God had made known by the Prophets, so that faith might be established by the truth in them, that is, the true worshippers of God. For that which was impossible to our natures and therefore would cause unbelief in man, God made known beforehand by the prophets, that by foretelling it, that is a long time before hand and by its being fulfilled at the end as God had foretold, we might know that it was God that beforehand revealed to us our salvation.

§ 86. If then the prophets prophesied that the Son of God was to appear upon the earth, and prophesied also where on the earth and how and in what manner He should make known His appearance, and all these prophecies the Lord took upon Himself; our faith in Him was well-founded, and the tradition of the preaching (is) true: that is to say, the testimony of the apostles, who being sent forth by the Lord preached in all the world the Son of God, who came to suffer, and endured to the destruction of death and the quickening of the flesh: that by the putting away of the enmity towards God, which is unrighteousness, we should obtain peace with Him, doing that which is pleasing to Him. And this was declared by the prophets in the words: *As the feet of one preaching glad tidings of peace, as one preaching good news* (Esaïas 52:7 LXX). And that these were to go forth from Judaea and from Jerusalem, to declare to us *the word* of God, which is *the law* for us, Isaiah says thus: *For out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem* (Esaïas 2:3 LXX). And that in all the earth they were to preach, David says: *Their sound hath gone forth unto all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world* (Ps. 18:4 LXX).

§ 97. Now by *Jacob* and *Israel* he means the Son of God, who received power from the Father over our life, and after having received this brought it down to us who were far off from Him, when He *appeared on earth and was conversant with men*, (Baruch 3:37 LXX), mingling and mixing the Spirit of God the Father with the creature formed by God, that man might be “with the formation” [sic] of God.

§ 98. This, beloved, is the preaching of the truth, and this is the manner of our redemption, and this is the way of life, which the prophets proclaimed, and Christ established, and the apostles delivered, and the Church in all the world

hands on to her children. This must we keep with all certainty, with a sound will and pleasing to God, with good works and right-willed disposition.



OUR ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ OF DECHANI